

**SPECIAL MEETING OF
DIRECTORS OF BELMONT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
Tuesday, November 22, 2005, 7:30 P.M.
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, ONE TWIN PINES LANE**

ROLL CALL

Directors Present: Mathewson, Feierbach, Bauer, Warden

Directors Absent: Metropulos (arr. 8:45 P.M.)

Staff Present: Interim District Manager Crist, Interim City Attorney Zafferano, Fire Chief Lowden, Finance Director Fil, Public Works Director Davis, District Secretary Cook.

ITEMS APPROVED ON CONSENT CALENDAR

Minutes of Special Meeting of October 11, 2005, and Regular Meeting of October 25, 2005.

ACTION: On a motion by Director Mathewson, seconded by Director Bauer, the Consent Calendar was unanimously approved by a show of hands (4-0, Metropulos absent).

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

Alternative Proposals for Future Fire Services in the City of Belmont

Interim District Manager Crist stated that the purpose of this evening's meeting was to hear from the Firefighters Local 2400 regarding their proposal, and that no decision will be made regarding fire services. He reviewed the meetings held to date on this matter, as well as next steps. He noted that negotiating meetings were scheduled with the three remaining agencies.

With regard to the firefighters' proposal, Interim District Manager Crist noted the following:

- it is conceptual only
- implementation cost data is missing
- governance issue not addressed (the only recommendation is for there to be five board members)
- revenue proposal has been revised and the cost formula has been expanded from initial proposal to include a calls-for-service component
- lacks a legal entity
- assumes issuance of an RFP (Request for Proposal) for contract-for-service.

Cory Biggs, Maze and Associates, stated that the cost data contained in the firefighters' proposal was insufficient to compare with the other proposals. He noted that management and administrative functions are significant, and the firefighters propose to outsource these responsibilities. The cost savings from the firefighters' proposal is \$400,000, the California Department of Forestry savings is \$1.2 million, and San Mateo's is \$470,000.

RECESS: 8:00 P.M.

RECONVENE: 8:20 P.M.

Gary Jacobs, Firefighters Local 2400, stated that their goal is to keep the bulk of the South County Fire Authority (SCFA) together. He clarified that since the firefighters are not an entity,

they have no ability to solicit costs from other agencies, and requested that the SCFA Board do so. He provided a brief history of SCFA, and outlined the reduction in staffing since 2003. He stated that their proposal identifies a funding formula, addresses unfunded liabilities, has the ability to provide uninterrupted service, has the least impact of all proposals, and there are no transitional issues to address.

He reviewed the benefits of the proposal, including the benefits to consolidate management and administrative services. He noted that this was a primary consideration for the initial formation of SCFA. He stated that potential vendors for management/administrative services include San Mateo or Redwood City, and that either is feasible. He noted there are minimal short-term savings to their proposal, but significant long-term savings.

Mr. Jacobs reviewed levels of service of the Agency. He noted the firefighters were willing to assist with financing issues related to revenues. He recommended an odd number of board members to address tie votes. He outlined details of their proposed funding formula, including the inclusion of a calls-for-service component. He noted the equal assessment factor provides for boundary growth.

(8:45 P.M. Director Metropulos arrived at the Meeting.)

In response to Director questions, Mr. Jacobs noted that five positions have been lost over the past couple of years, and other firefighters will be eligible for retirement within the next two years. The chief is retiring at the end of the year. The Fire Marshall position could be absorbed into other services or agencies. He noted that savings could be realized through absorbed positions or through attrition. The responsibility of the Battalion Chiefs would grow, resulting in a need for a Deputy Battalion Chief position. Overhead and administrative costs would be reduced. He reviewed the rationale used in the funding formula, as well as details of equipment and manpower needs during a fire. He noted that a reduction in the number of fire trucks places a burden on other cities, creates delays, and could have an impact on regional fire resources.

Director Feierbach thanked the firefighters for their proposal, and noted they are silent partners in this issue. She stated that the report is comprehensive, and has some good and bad points. The current governance works well. She supports keeping SCFA intact if it is financially feasible, and does not support using the Cities of San Mateo or Redwood City as a hybrid. She expressed support for the proposed funding formula. She cannot support the issuance of an RFP for management/administrative services at this time.

President Warden stated he appreciated the time and effort of the firefighters. He noted the proposed funding formula is a good one. He supports the removal of the city managers from the management structure and having the Fire Chief report directly to the Board. Full reimbursement for hazmat services it not addressed. He also supports keeping SCFA intact if feasible. He noted the recent paradigm shift in politics with Belmont's partner city might help address the fire services issue. Morale is important. The need for an odd number of Board members is not necessary as there have only been two tie votes in three years.

President Warden stated he does not support outsourcing of management. He noted that the tie vote regarding the decision to go for an assessment is what pushed the decision to dissolve the Authority. Transitional issues will be complicated. He would like to see if San Carlos is amenable to discuss keeping SCFA intact, which would include the need for new management structure and potential assessment to address finances.

Director Metropulos expressed his support for keeping SCFA intact. He noted there were never any split votes when he was on the SCFA Board. He commented that the two communities should work together to resolve this issue, and the recent changes in San Carlos may help.

Director Bauer stated these recent fire discussions have exposed him to components of the fire department structure. He supports re-engaging with San Carlos to resolve issues. He is not in favor of dissolution, and would support whatever could be done to keep the Agency intact. He supports continuing negotiations with other agencies, and he expressed concern regarding morale.

Director Feierbach stated that the dissolution concerns finances, and there is no choice. She noted that the change in membership of the San Carlos City Council may help bridge differences. She also supports continuing dialog with other agencies while continuing discussions with San Carlos.

President Warden noted this is a very difficult decision. Ongoing financial issues made it impossible to continue to operate status quo. The parcel tax failed. He supported an assessment, which was not supported by the entire SCFA Board.

Directors concurred to continue negotiations with the three other agencies.

ADJOURNMENT at this time, being 9:15 P.M.

Meeting audio-recorded and videotaped
Audio Recording 622
Minutes approved 1/11/2006

Terri Cook
District Secretary